MDOT
Michigan Department of Transportation

For More Information Contact:
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I-94 REHABILITATION PROJECT
NEWSLETTER

City Council and Mayor's Office Approve Recommended Alternative (continued)

9. Regarding the issue of correction of existing noise and air quality violations, MDOT will correct existing air and noise quality violations according to FHWA guidelines.
10. Regarding the issue of securing all funding for noise barriers – walls, landscaping, buffering, etc. – as well as funding for modifications of streets intersecting the service drives and on-going maintenance of the barrier walls before any highway approvals are given, MDOT clarified that memorandums of understanding will be developed between the City and MDOT describing funding share and exact maintenance responsibilities.
11. The railroad right-of-way east of I-75 and south of I-94 will remain as a rail corridor. Rail for the region is currently being addressed in separate studies.

As the project moves forward with the Recommended Alternative, further meetings with the City of Detroit, project stakeholders, and the public will occur as part of the project.

MDOT
Michigan Department of Transportation
October 2003

I-94 Rehabilitation Project
(east of I-96 to Conner Avenue)

Newsletter

The I-94 Rehabilitation Project includes a limited-access transportation corridor that begins east of the I-96 interchange and ends east of Conner Avenue. This area encompasses major freeway-to-freeway interchanges with M-10 and I-75, and is adjacent to the I-96 interchange.

The I-94 Rehabilitation Project was initiated by the Michigan Department of Transportation in 1994 and is currently in the final environmental documentation phase. See pages 2 and 3 for more information on the project's background and next steps.

Special point of interest:

As part of continued community outreach, Public Information Meetings will be held on October 21, 2003 at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History and Wayne County Community College on October 22, 2003. Members of the community are welcomed between 3:30 PM and 7:30 PM each day. See page 3 for more details.

Inside this issue:

City Council and Mayor's Office Approve Recommended Alternative

On August 1, 2003, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) presented its current plans for I-94 to the Detroit City Council. MDOT received unanimous votes of approval from the City Council to move forward with the project's Recommended Alternative with a joint legislative and executive "Resolution of Support". The "Resolution of Support" was officially approved by the Mayor's office on August 12, 2003 and published in the Detroit Legal News on August 14, 2003.

The Detroit Legal News article described that the City Council, in 2001, had passed a resolution with 11 changes to the Build Alternative included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. It reported that since 2001, "the design of the freeway has continued to evolve and your Honorable Body's comments have been taken into account. CPC (City Planning Commission) staff has attended several meetings with MDOT and its consultants and, most recently, representatives from the Mayor's office, DPW (Department of Public Works) and DDOT (Detroit Department of Transportation). The most recent iteration of the design, as described in the 'I-94 Rehabilitation Project Recommended Alternative Analysis Final Report,' appears to substantially address the concerns raised in your previous resolution." (Detroit Legal News, 8/14/03)

The following summarizes how each of the 11 changes requested by the City Council are being addressed:

1. The 55-foot reserved median space has been removed as requested.
2. To address the width of continuous service drives, 2-lanes with an 8-foot shoulder will be provided. Based on 2025 traffic demand, 3-lanes on the eastbound service drive between M-10 and I-75 will be provided.
3. Hendrie Street access has been redesigned to address the request for the addition of a street east of Woodward and parallel to the service drive for local traffic in order to protect the residences along Hendrie Street.
4. MDOT clarified documentation of the project limits and an Environmental Assessment will not be included as part of the project.
5. The project's EIS includes the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Study's impact on truck traffic as requested.
6. In the preliminary design, MDOT has reduced spacing between the auxiliary lanes and mainline lanes as much as possible and has 'tightened' ramp geometrics in order to limit the taking of private property. Further efforts to address these concerns will be undertaken in final design.
7. In response to the issue of special consideration of schools regarding noise mitigation, MDOT will address noise mitigation according to FHWA guidelines.
8. In response to the request of using rapid transit as a traffic construction mitigation component, through flexible TEA 21 funding in the corridor, MDOT is considering construction mitigation funding for buses. There are currently no rail alternatives to I-94 that have been identified by SEMCOG.

(Continued on Page 4)

Project Background

The I-94 Rehabilitation Project includes a limited-access transportation corridor that begins east of the I-96 interchange and ends east of Conner Avenue. This area encompasses major freeway-to-freeway interchanges with M-10 and I-75, and is adjacent to the I-96 interchange.

The project would reconstruct and widen 6.7 miles of I-94 (Edsel Ford Freeway) in the city of Detroit, and reconstruct 57 bridges and the freeway-to-freeway interchanges with M-10 and I-75. Continuous service drives would be constructed along the entire length of the I-94, M-10, and I-75 project sections. The rehabilitation of I-94 would address operational, current and future capacity, safety, pavement, and bridge needs along I-94. By providing service drives, local traffic would be separated from freeway traffic, thereby enhancing local traffic circulation.

The Recommended Alternative consists of:

- Four through-traffic lanes on the I-94 mainline and improved geometrics
- Redesigned interchanges with M-10 and I-75
- Adequate acceleration-deceleration lanes
- Auxiliary lanes for weaving
- 14-foot inside shoulders, 12-foot outside shoulders, and a six- to ten-foot median in the center of the freeway in which to place a concrete barrier
- 2-lane service drives, except in the location between M-10 and I-75 on the south side of the I-94 freeway, where three lanes will be provided

Need for the Project

The need for the I-94 Rehabilitation Project is driven by:

- Aging infrastructure
- Safety
- Inadequate Capacity
- Outdated design

Traffic Projections

Mainline: The traffic projections for 2025 indicate annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes in 2025 will increase by approximately 35 percent over the 1995 traffic volumes. 1995 volumes varied from 120,000 to 160,000 AADT. As presently designed, I-94 will not be able to accommodate forecasted 2025 traffic.
Service Drives: Continuous service drives do not currently exist in the corridor. In 2025, with the Recommended Alternative, continuous service drives will assist with local traffic circulation and access by providing a continuous corridor that does not require freeway usage.

Traffic Impact

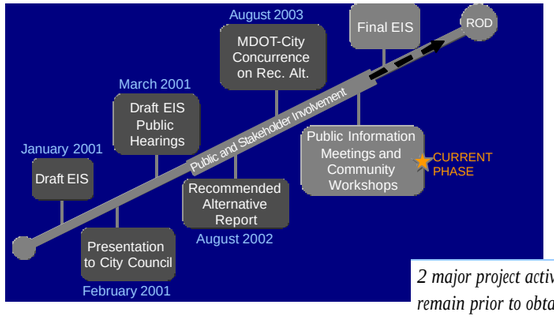
The section of I-94 proposed for rehabilitation was constructed in the late 1940s and early 1950s and is one of the oldest urban interstate freeways in the country. The project portion of I-94 is aged and requires frequent maintenance. It also has an outdated design at various segments and interchanges. The current design and high traffic volumes contribute to inadequate capacity, especially during the morning and evening rush hours.

Freight Traffic

I-94 in the project area has been termed *"the distribution manifold"* for the freight transport system in Southeast Michigan. It lies at the center of all of Southeast Michigan's major freight transport facilities, including the major interstate freeways, border crossings, and rail facilities. From the standpoint of intrastate, interstate and international commerce, the continued ability of I-94 in the project area to provide these direct and indirect connections, will impact the future of commerce in the State and the Region.

Recent forecasts by the Federal Highway Department's Freight Analysis Framework (FAF) for 2020 show that I-94 through Southeastern Michigan will operate over its capacity. Freight traffic (FAF trucks) is forecasted to grow at an annual average rate of more than 4%.

History of Project Activities



2 major project activities remain prior to obtaining a Record of Decision.

- *Public Information Meetings and Workshops*
- *Final EIS*

Project Coordination

Project Coordination has included:

- Coordination with City of Detroit Departments (over 50 Meetings)
- Public Information/Community Meetings (over 100 Meetings)
  —Website and Telephone Hotline
- Interagency Coordination Committee (ICC) (over 30 Meetings)

Evaluation of Alternatives and Selection of a Recommended Alternative

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), published in January 2001, evaluated the following alternatives:

- No-Build Alternative
- Enhanced No-Build Alternative (Rebuild freeway as is with minor improvements to shoulders, bridges, and ramps)
- DEIS Build Alternative (Additional freeway mainline lane, reserved median space, and 3-lane service drives)

In response to public, City of Detroit, and other stakeholder comments received during the DEIS comment period, three modifications to the DEIS Build Alternative were studied. These modifications were developed as a design response to comments received on the DEIS. The comments on the DEIS indicated that a narrower cross-section was desired to reduce impacts on neighboring properties and minimize displacements to the extent practicable. In addition, the SEMCOG report, *Improving Transit in Southeast Michigan: A Framework for Action, October 2001,* indicated that transit was considered for the I-94 corridor, but I-94 was not included in the 12 corridor, 259 mile recommended system. This led to the conclusion that the reserved space in the median could be eliminated without adversely affecting future transit opportunities. The 2025 traffic analyses indicated that the three-lane service drives could be reduced to two-lane service drives and still satisfy the purpose and need of the project.

The three modifications studied all resulted in a narrower footprint than the DEIS Build Alternative. The DEIS Build Alternative, together with the three modifications, represented all possible combinations of wide and narrow median, and two- and three-lane service drives.

Recommended Alternative Decision Factors

The process for selection of a Recommended Alternative considered the following factors:

- Engineering (Capacity, Safety, Constructability, Cost, ROW, Drainage and Mitigation)
- Community Access and Circulation (Local Transit, Pedestrian and Vehicular Access)
- Environmental (Noise, Air Quality, Water Quality, Aesthetics and Cultural Resources)
- Social and Economic (Environmental Justice, Construction and Building Impacts)

In addition, the process addressed issues raised by the City of Detroit and Council, including:

- Removal of 55-foot median
- Width of continuous service drives *(2-lanes with 8-foot shoulder and 3-lanes on EB service drive between M-10 and I-75)*
- Redesign of Hendrie Street access
- Clarification of documentation of project limits
- Inclusion of Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal (DIFT) Study impacts
- Limiting Right-of-Way (ROW) impacts
- Addressing noise and air according to FHWA guidelines
- Considering construction mitigation funding for buses
- Addressing City noise barrier maintenance funding share

Summary of Recommended Alternative Benefits

- Meets future local and regional transportation needs
- Responsive to public and agency concerns
- Provides utilization for multiple modes
- Minimizes negative impacts on community
- Limited ROW taking
- Provides connectivity
- Construction flexibility/phasing

Next Steps

- **Fall 2003** – Public Information Meetings
- **Late 2003 - Early 2004** – Context Sensitive Solutions Workshops and Cultural Resources Workshop
- **Late 2004 - Early 2005** – Final EIS and Record of Decision

Upcoming Community Involvement

Public participation has been a crucial and on-going element in the evaluation of alternatives and in the development of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the I-94 Rehabilitation Project. As part of the public coordination process, public comments were received after circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and are being addressed in preparation of the FEIS. Seven-hundred and thirty-four (734) comments were received, including comments received from open-forum-style public hearings held March 5 – 6, 2001.

As part of the continued community outreach effort associated with the I-94 Rehabilitation Project, **Public Information Meetings will be held on October 21, 2003 at Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History (315 E. Warren, Entrance/Parking via Farnsworth) and on October 22, 2003 at Wayne County Community College (5901 Conner Ave., Multi-Purpose Room)**. These open-house style meetings will update the community on the I-94 Rehabilitation Project and answer any questions that you may have. **Members of the community are welcomed between the hours of 3:30 – 7:30 PM each day.**

Also as part of the ongoing public involvement effort, MDOT will be hosting Context Sensitive Solutions and Cultural Resource Workshops along the corridor in late 2003-early 2004. These hands-on workshops will provide a forum where organizations and the community can discuss the project and explore design concepts for I-94.